

UCLA REMARKS

It is a great honor to be with you tonight. I am deeply grateful for this distinguished award.

I want to thank UCLA, not just for this honor, but also for the lasting contributions the school made to my education and my sense of the fundamental and varied ways our laws and legal system affect society.

My UCLA education instilled in me--and in many of my fellow students--a strong belief and commitment to public service. The atmosphere here honored public service and it encouraged us not just to look at the law as a livelihood, but as a powerful instrument for the public good. That guidance stays with me to this day and shapes how I resolve issues in Congress.

Unfortunately, our society no longer seems to view public service in the same way. Today government and politicians are casually distrusted and frequently ridiculed. The notion of public service is quaint but suspect.

The reality is that our democracy will be crippled if trust is eroded in our government, courts, schools, free press, and churches and synagogues.

I know the leaders and professors at UCLA have accepted this responsibility and are still instilling the same values and teachings I learned in today's students. They are doing their part and doing it superbly.

But they can't meet this challenge alone. All of us have the power--each in a small way--to change how our communities view public service and government. We must rededicate

ourselves to this goal and commit not to passively accept the cynicism that is corrupting our politics.

I accept this award in this spirit and will always value the recognition that you have given me this evening.